

Executive Action Briefing
ASAP Strategic Focus Area
Prescription Drug Abuse

BACKGROUND: On November 13, 2008 the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) examined the Strategic Focus Area of Prescription Drug Abuse. Discussion focused on strategies that would best equip professionals in prevention, treatment and law enforcement to respond to this growing drug threat to youth and adults. From that meeting came a series of recommendations that, once carried out, will enhance the capacity of the state and its communities to identify and respond to prescription drug abuse. ASAP will coordinate with its member agencies to implement actions to build the capacity to respond to this critical issue.

MISSION: Identify and respond to the complex issues that influence the abuse and use of prescription drugs in Arizona's communities and enhance the state's capacity to monitor the manufacturing, distribution and consumption of all prescription drugs.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Problem #1: Insufficient structures and resources to monitor prescription drug manufacturing, distribution and consumption.

Goal: Direct resources to develop and/or enhance a statewide Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program to provide current data and data analysis of prescription drug abuse in the general population and to establish appropriate initiatives to promote prevention, enhance enforcement and facilitate referral to treatment.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Appoint a Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force or Working Group to develop a Statewide Comprehensive plan to respond to this emerging threat.
- ✓ Support the implementation of the Arizona State Board of Pharmacy's Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program. Currently, funding for the Program will end on June 30, 2009. In February 2009 the Board of Pharmacy applied for a federal grant to provide financial support for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.
- ✓ Educate the public and relevant parties about the Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program.
- ✓ Actively participate in Pharmaceutical Crimes Working Group to enhance enforcement strategies around compliance to state and federal statutes related to the manufacture, distribution and consumption of controlled substances.
- ✓ Review and compare Arizona's A.R.S. title 36, Chapter 28 (Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program) with other states to examine both substance and effectiveness of current statute.
- ✓ Develop language to enhance the Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program to promote treatment alternatives.
- ✓ Enhance monitoring mechanisms in the current statute around *consumption* of prescription drugs.
 - The statute should be inclusive of parties not currently required to report to the Prescription Monitoring Program, including but not limited to tribal health facilities, Military and Veteran's Affairs facilities.

Actions/ Outcomes:

- ❖ The PDMP program has monitored 13 million prescription records. Has 1,644 pharmacies currently reporting data to the electronic program database. Has 1,088 medical practitioners, 280 pharmacists, 34 law enforcement investigators, 16 regulatory board investigators, and 2 AHCCCS investigators authorized to pull information off of the system (as of August 2009). Has allowed various regulatory agencies to operate more efficiently at a time when state budget cuts and lack of manpower are major concerns. Has provided information to 68,080 medical practitioners, 14,319 pharmacists, 383 law enforcement investigators, 199 regulatory boards, and 2 AHCCCS investigators. This information is used to assist medical practitioners and pharmacists in treating patients, as well as to assist law enforcement agencies and others with identifying and deterring drug diversion.
- ❖ The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission provided funding to keep the PDMP operational till June 30, 2010. The prescription drug workgroup will developed a legislative proposal that will provide a sustainable funding source to keep the PDMP operational.
- ❖ Agencies continue to participate in the quarterly Pharmaceutical Crimes Workgroup Meetings.

PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND ENFORCEMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Problem #2: There is a trend of increasing abuse of prescription drugs and related deaths, particularly among youth. Current statutes and programs related to prescription drug abuse monitoring or intervention do not have sufficient controls or messages to promote prevention and treatment in the state's response to prescription drugs in the home or in the community.

Goal: Enlist parents, youth, communities, consumers, the pharmaceutical industry, retailers and policymakers in the development of strategies that demonstrate both the consequences of illegal access to prescription drugs and the consequences of the abuse of prescription drugs.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ The Division for Substance Abuse Policy will work with partner agencies to develop and implement prevention and public awareness campaign around prescription drug abuse and proper disposal.
- ✓ ASAP and the Division for Substance Abuse Policy will work with the Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group to provide a state data profile of prescription drug abuse in Arizona.
- ✓ Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force or Working Group will work to educate legislators and other policy makers about the emerging threat of prescription drug abuse.
- ✓ Enhance current laws to include parental accountability language regarding youth access to prescription drugs in the home and develop an appropriate communications strategy about the consequences of failing to prevent youth access.
- ✓ Provide local community coalitions with data on prescription drug abuse in their counties and advance model prevention and intervention strategies.
 - The Workforce Development Committee will provide two web-based trainings for substance abuse prevention coalitions and providers, one focusing on the epidemiology of prescription drug abuse and one focusing on evidence based practices in reduction of prescription drug abuse.
- ✓ Through the work of community coalitions educate medical providers (including physicians and pharmacists), schools, faith-based organizations and others regarding prescription drug abuse and

diversion. Strategies could include pharmacy checklists to prevent medication thefts and physician-patient agreements where narcotics are prescribed.

- ADHS will distribute new prevention funds to RBHA's and their sub-contracted providers to be used for programs targeting the prevention of prescription drug abuse.
- ✓ Establish statewide "Take Back" programs with protocols and procedures for collecting and properly disposing of prescription drugs and educate the public and community coalitions about them.
- ✓ Work with the pharmaceutical industry and retailers to provide a fact sheet or pamphlet to consumers to educate them about safeguarding their prescription drugs and properly disposing unused drugs. Provide guidance to families for the proper storage of prescription drugs.
- ✓ Include cultural competency to address critical populations in all prevention and intervention strategies.
- ✓ Reporting of drug offenses should be standardized across the state to allow longitudinal and cross-jurisdictional analysis.
- ✓ Host a pharmaceutical drug diversion training program (approved by AZ POST for continuing training hours) to provide information on current trends and diversion methods to enhance law enforcement investigative capabilities statewide.

Actions/ Outcomes:

- ❖ ASAP member agencies developed a prevention and public awareness campaign around prescription drug abuse and proper disposal. The informational pamphlet will be distributed by Fry's pharmacies in December 2009. It is estimated the campaign will reach 100,000 citizens.
- ❖ Inclusion of prescription drug abuse data has been incorporated into the 2009 Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile.
- ❖ The DEA has developed a protocol for law enforcement to follow when collecting prescription drugs in partnership with community substance abuse coalitions. Over 3,000 pounds of prescription drugs have been collected a community "take back" events.
- ❖ The HIDTA National Pharmaceutical and Methamphetamine Initiative is hosting a Prescription Drug Abuse Training Conference on December 1-2, 2009. Over 240 participants will attend and hear information on current trends and diversion methods to enhance the states response to prescription abuse.